

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6927
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 CAPE TOWN 0483

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: THE SAG DECISION

1. SUMMARY: AS WE PREPARE THE GROUND FOR PRESENTATION
OF THE FINAL PROPOSAL TO SOUTH AFRICA, A NUMBER OF FACTORS
SUGGEST THERE IS STILL A POSSIBILITY THAT THE SAG DECISION
ON THE PROPOSAL HAS NOT YET BEEN FIRMLY DETERMINED. IN AIMING
FOR THE BRASS RING, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POSITIONS AND ACTIONS
WE MIGHT TAKE WHICH COULD: (A) HELP ENCOURAGE ANY INCLINATION
TOWARD THE PROPOSAL, (B) UNDERCUT OPPOSITION WITHIN THE
NATIONALIST LEADERSHIP, AND (C) REDUCE THE CREDIBILITY OF
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POSSIBLE JUSTIFICATIONS THE SAG COULD USE TO RATIONALIZE
A DECISION TO MOVE AHEAD UNILATERALLY. END SUMMARY.

2. AS WE ENTER THE HOME STRETCH OF THE NAMIBIA
NEGOTIATIONS, WE HAVE TRIED TO ASSESS WHERE THE SAG
IS LIKELY TO COME OUT ON THE PROPOSALS. THE SIGNALS
AT THIS POINT ARE SO MIXED THAT WE ARE NOT CONFIDENT IN

MAKING A FIRM PREDICTION. THE CHANCES ARE PROBABLY BETTER THAN EVEN THAT THE SAG WILL NOT ACCEPT OUR PROPOSALS AS PRESENTLY DRAFTED. HOWEVER, THE FACT THAT THE SAG HAS NOT RULED OUT A SETTLEMENT NOR AT THIS LATE STAGE STARTED TO ORCHESTRATE A CONSISTENT CAMPAIGN TO PAVE THE WAY FOR SUCH ACTION LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT OPTIONS ARE STILL OPEN. WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT THE SCALES CAN BE TIPPED IN FAVOR OF AN INTERNATIONAL SOLUTION. NEVERTHELESS WE WANT TO BRING TO THE DEPARTMENT AND USUN'S ATTENTION CERTAIN FACTORS STILL PLAYING IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND SOME ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT PROVE HELPFUL IN OBTAINING SAG APPROVAL OF OUR PROPOSALS.

3. ONE POSITIVE SIGN IS THE SAG'S CONTINUING WILLINGNESS TO PURSUE THE WESTERN PROPOSAL AND ITS AVOIDANCE OF OBDURACY IN RECENT TALKS HERE, EXCEPT ON THE TIMING OF THE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL OF SAG FORCES. WHAT WE MAY BE SEEING, OF COURSE, ARE THE FINAL TOUCHES ON THE SAG EFFORT TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT IT HAS SINCERELY PURSUED THE NEGOTIATIONS TO THE END OF THE LINE. BUT IF A SAG DECISION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, WE WOULD THINK THAT TACTICALLY THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD WANT TO BEGIN TO UNDERSCORE MORE STRONGLY THE FIRMNESS OF THEIR POSITION ON THE BASIC ISSUES OF SAG AND UN FORCES AND TO HARP PUBLICLY MORE THAN THEY ARE CURRENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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DOING ON THE ALLEGED PRO-SWAPO BIAS OF THE WEST AND THE UN. BOTHA'S PROPOSAL FOR "CONSENSUS" DECISION-MAKING IS POSSIBLY A SIGN OF A DESIRE TO REACH AGREEMENT. SAG MANIPULATION OF THE INFORMATION GIVEN US ON LOCAL POLICE AND MILITARY FORCES IN NAMIBIA (SEPTTEL) MAY ALSO SUGGEST A DISPOSITION TO REACH AGREEMENT.

4. ANOTHER CONSIDERATION IS HOW THE PERSONAL AMBITIONS OF THOSE WHO ASPIRE TO SUCCEED VORSTER PLAY ON THE NAMIBIAN QUESTION. THE MUTED ON-GOING POWER STRUGGLE INVOLVING SUCH KEY PLAYERS AS PIK BOTHA, CONNIE MULDER AND P.W. BOTHA, WE BELIEVE IS A FACTOR THAT COULD AFFECT THE DECISION. BOTHA HAS MENTIONED TO ME THAT HE IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM "SOME PARLIAMENTARIANS" FOR BEING TOO SOFT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. BRAND FOURIE RECENTLY TOLD MY BRITISH COLLEAGUE THAT BOTHA HAS "HIS BACK UP AGAINST MANY WALLS" ON THIS ISSUE. THIS COULD BE MORE PLAY-ACTING BY PIK, BUT I SUSPECT THAT FACTORS BEARING ON THE STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESSION ARE AT WORK HERE. PIK BOTHA IS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE SINCE HE HAS NO POLITICAL BASE OTHER THAN SUCCESS OR TOUGHNESS IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO MAKE HIM A COMPETITOR.

5. THE SOUTH WEST AFRICA NATIONAL PARTY APPARENTLY HAS HAD SOME INPUT INTO THE POLITICAL DYNAMICS. AS NOTED CAPE TOWN 0423, WHEN SIR DAVID SCOTT AND I MET WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON MARCH 5, WE WERE STRUCK WITH HIS PRE-OCCUPATION WITH THE PROBLEM POSED BY THE PRO-SAG WHITE POLITICAL PARTIES IN NAMIBIA.

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BOTHA CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT THE ADAMANT OPPOSITION OF THE OLD LINE NATIONALISTS LIKE DU PLESSIS TO THE WESTERN PROPOSAL WAS COMPLICATING THE SOUTH AFRICAN DECISION. HE MAY HAVE DWELLED ON THE SWA NATS' POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE-MAKING MERELY AS A TACTIC TO IMPRESS US. BUT IT COULD WELL BE TRUE THAT THE SOUTH WEST HARDLINERS HAVE FOUND SUPPORT IN THE CABINET, POSSIBLY AMONG PIK BOTHA'S RIVALS, FOR THEIR ARGUMENT THAT GIVEN THE RHODESIAN EXAMPLE, THE SAG SHOULD COMMIT ITSELF TO AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TO BE MANAGED BY THE SWA NATIONAL PARTY. THEY ARE ALSO

LIKELY TO ARGUE THAT THE RECENT BLOODY OVAMBO-HERERO
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CLASHES IN NAMIBIA (CAPE TOWN 0403) MAKE PLAIN THE
NEED TO MOVE AHEAD RAPIDLY ON THE INTERNAL TRACK.

6. IF THERE IS AT THIS POINT A GENUINE DEBATE
GOING ON WITHIN THE INNER SANCTUM OF AFRIKANERDOM,
PIK BOTHA WILL HAVE TO SELL THE PACKAGE NOT ONLY IN
TERMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PAYOFF FOR SOUTH AFRICA
AND THE ENDING OF THE COSTLY CONFLICT IN THE NORTH,
BUT ALSO ON THE BASIS THAT THE PROPOSAL IS WORKABLE
AND THAT THE SECURITY OF NAMIBIA AND OF SOUTH AFRICAN
FORCES IN THE TERRITORY CAN BE ASSURED DURING THE
TRANSITION PERIOD. INDEED, THOSE WHO OPPOSE ACCEPTANCE
OF THE PROPOSAL ARE LIKELY TO FOCUS ON THE SECURITY
ASPECT, ARGUING THAT THE TERMS OF THE TRANSITION
ARRANGEMENTS ARE SUCH THAT SOUTH AFRICA CANNOT LIVE
UP TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S PLEDGE THAT THE SAG WILL
CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR THE SECURITY OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA
UNTIL INDEPENDENCE.

7. THE SAM NUJOMA INTERVIEW WITH SABC-TV, WHILE OF
LITTLE IMPACT OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA, IS A MATTER OF
IMPORTANCE HERE AS OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC AT LARGE
ASSESS THE RISKS OF ENTERING INTO AN ELECTORAL AGREEMENT WITH
SWAPO. HARDLINERS IN THE CABINET WILL UNDOUBTEDLY
ARGUE THAT NUJOMA'S REMARKS MAKE QUITE EVIDENT THE
FUTILITY AND DANGER OF ENGAGING IN ANY ELECTORAL
CONTEST WITH SWAPO AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION
FOR PROCEEDING UNILATERALLY. ADVOCATES FOR
AN INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT HAVE A HARD TIME HANDLING
THIS CHARGE.

8. A MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE AND ONE THAT COULD BE
ARGUED EITHER WAY IN THE SAG'S CONSIDERATION OF THE
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PROPOSAL ARE THE EVENTS IN RHODESIA AND THE HORN.
AS NOTED IN OUR EARLIER REPORT ON THE SAG'S REASSESSMENT
OF THE SITUATION (CAPE TOWN 0331), THE SOUTH
AFRICANS ARE PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO REPORTS THAT
THE US IS ADOPTING A TOUGHER POLICY TOWARDS SOVIET
AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA AND THAT THE US HAS
MODIFIED ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT
IN RHODESIA. SOME SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERS MAY ARGUE

THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS PROMISE A MORE BENIGN US AND WESTERN REACTION TO AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA.

9. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME INSPIRED MEDIA COMMENTARY HAS LINKED THE REPUTED SHIFT IN US POLICY TO A "MORE REALISTIC" WESTERN POSITION ON THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATIONS. THE IMPLICATION OF THIS LINE IS THAT THE TOUGHENING OF US POLICY AGAINST COMMUNIST MACHINATIONS IN AFRICA MAKES THE WESTERN PROPOSAL ON NAMIBIA MORE CREDIBLE, I.E., THE WEST WILL NOT BE PRO-SWAPO. IT COULD ALSO BE ARGUED BY BOTHA THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN GREAT POWER POLITICS IN AFRICA, SAG ACCEPTANCE OF THE NAMIBIAN PROPOSAL WOULD IMPROVE THE CHANCES THAT SOUTH AFRICA COULD ENHANCE ITS OVERALL RELATIONS WITH THE WEST.

10. WITH THESE CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS WHICH MIGHT ENCOURAGE THOSE INCLINED TO SUPPORT THE LEADERSHIP AND ALSO REDUCE THE CREDIBILITY OF SAG RATIONALIZATIONS FOR MOVING AHEAD UNILATERALLY.

CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

11. WE THINK THE RECOMMENDATION IN CAPE TOWN 0482 MAY HELP ACHIEVE SAG ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSALS, ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK IS NOT HAVING CONSENSUS COVERING THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S DECISION ON THE SIZE AND COMPOSITION OF THE SADF.
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WE AT LEAST CAN REDUCE SAG CRITICISM OF THE PROPOSALS BY MAKING THE CHANGE SUGGESTED. WE DO NOT THINK SWAPO WOULD OBJECT TO THIS MODIFICATION.

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AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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HIGH LEVEL US COMMENT

12. WE MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER A HIGH LEVEL US COMMENT ON THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATIONS AS PART OF OUR HOME STRETCH PREPARATIONS. SUCH A STATEMENT COULD BE USEFUL TO BOTHA IF HE IS IN FACT INCLINED TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER A HIGH ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL GIVING A PRESS INTERVIEW IN WHICH THE NAMIBIAN SITUATION WOULD BE DISCUSSED. THE INTERVIEW WHICH SHOULD BE PUBLISHED BEFORE WE PASS THE FINAL PROPOSAL TO SWAPO AND THE SAG, SHOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--EXPRESS CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM ABOUT THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS
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AND URGE BOTH PARTIES TO TAKE THE FEW REMAINING STEPS TO ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGREEMENT.

--REITERATE THE POINTS MADE BY AMBASSADOR MCHENRY IN HIS INTERVIEW LAST MONTH THAT THE WESTERN PROPOSAL PROVIDES FOR FREE AND IMPARTIAL ELECTIONS TO DETERMINE DEMOCRATICALLY THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA. ...MAJORITY RULE MUST PREVAIL...IF THE TURNHALLE WINS WE MUST SEE THAT ITS PREFERRED CONSITUTION IS IMPLEMENTED.

--EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THAT UNDER THE PROPOSAL THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL APPOINTED BY SOUTH AFRICA AND THE UNSR APPOINTED BY THE UNSYG WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER WILL BE ABLE TO ASSURE THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IS CARRIED OUT.

--EMPHASIZE THAT THE PROPOSAL CALLS FOR A CEASEFIRE AND CREATION
OF CONDITIONS FREE OF INTIMIDATION FROM ANY SOURCE.

--EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THAT THE SECURITY AND WELL-BEING OF NAMIBIA
WILL BE SAFEGUARDED DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD AND THAT
NO FOREIGN FORCE WILL SEEK TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION, BUT IF
THEY DID SO, WE WOULD VIEW IT AS A MOST SERIOUS MATTER.
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